

WASHINGTON D.C.—Congressman Charlie Wilson voted to support the development and commercialization of innovative technologies by small high-tech companies. H.R. 5819, reauthorizes the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) program and Small Business Technology Transfer Research (STTR) program. The bill is designed to increase the participation of small, high technology firms in federal research and development and passed the House of Representatives with a vote of 368 – 43. The final bill included an amendment offered by Congressman Wilson. “People may not think of legislation coming out of the Science and Technology Committee as helping small business,” Wilson said. “But, I look for an opportunity to help small businesses everywhere I can.” Wilson serves on the Science and Technology Committee.

Specifically this act extends the SBIR and STTR programs for a period of two years. Notably, the legislation would increase the funding for small research firms by half a billion dollars. The Act includes a number of provisions designed to encourage small businesses to apply for SBIR and STTR awards, ensures that businesses are not discriminated against based on their business models or the type of capital they receive and establishes an initiative to increase participation from small firms owned by veterans, women and minorities and those located in rural areas. This will diversify the program and increase competition for these important awards.

Wilson’s amendment to the bill, which passed the Science and Technology Committee last week, adds nanotechnology-related research to the list of critical technology deserving “special consideration” for federal grants for their work in nanotechnology. Special consideration simply means that the projects would be given extra weight throughout their federal grant application process.

“Today, nanotechnology has an impact on all sectors of our economy. And the work of nanotechnology can be found in electronics – like our cell phones and blackberries – in our cosmetics, cars, and medical products. With nanotechnology playing such a fundamental role in our economy, it is critical that U.S. investment in this industry continue to grow,” Wilson said.

“At Ohio University, which is in my district, such research is being done. I recently heard from some nano-scientists that if their research was included in this way, it would help their projects in the lab migrate to the market,” Wilson added.

The reauthorization bill now heads to the Senate.